



# Seattle Ferry Terminal Project

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## Purpose and Need Statement

### PRELIMINARY DRAFT FOR REVIEW

#### What is the purpose of the Seattle Ferry Terminal Project?

Washington State Ferries (WSF) intends to improve the existing terminal at Colman Dock to ensure that it will continue to provide an adequate level of service in the future. This improvement project has the following specific primary objectives:

- Replace the aging and deteriorating dock structure, slip foundations, and transfer spans
- Accommodate growth projected by the WSF Long-Range Strategic Plan
- Enhance operational and system efficiencies
- Improve facility design to enhance ferry passenger access to bus and rail modes of transportation and pedestrian access to the downtown core
- Incorporate physical improvements at the terminal in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Maritime Transportation Security Act.

#### Why is this project needed?

The following bullets describe the needs for the project in greater detail.

- Dock is constructed on damaged or deteriorated timber pilings

The original pier was constructed in 1936; though it was reconstructed in 1964, WSF reused many timber piles from the original construction. In 1971, the timber trestle was added to in the northwest corner of the terminal. A 2002 underwater inspection indicated that almost one-half of the timber piles were damaged or deteriorated. Substantial damage was also noted to the bracing members located in the vicinity of the observation deck area and to the framing timbers that support the sewage tank. Most of the damage has been from *Bankia* infestation and *Limnoria* attack, which are commonly known as shipworms and gribbles. All of these timber components of the dock need to be replaced. In addition, an engineering review based on the International Building Code indicates that the trestle does not meet current seismic standards and needs to be upgraded.

There are other physical deficiencies that have been identified at Colman Dock. For example, the transfer spans for loading passengers and cars onto the ferries are aging and deteriorating and need to be replaced. Also, the electrical systems at the dock and in the terminal building are inadequate to support future identified needs at the dock.

- Terminal has insufficient capacity to accommodate growth

The WSF Long-Range Strategic Plan will be finalized in summer 2006 and be adopted by the Washington State Transportation Commission as part of the Washington Transportation Plan. The draft of the plan indicates that Colman Dock will experience considerable growth in pedestrian and vehicular traffic between now and 2030 as a result of the following factors:

- Growth in Kitsap County will increase both walk-on and vehicle traffic on routes that enter Seattle
- Growth in foot passengers will create a need to expand the passenger capacity of Bainbridge Island vessels by approximately 2015
- Growth in Seattle-Bremerton vehicle and passenger traffic will trigger the need for a third boat on that route by approximately 2016
- To accommodate high growth projected for south Kitsap County, WSF is considering redirecting Southworth passenger-vehicle service directly into Colman Dock around 2014-2015
- Population growth in north Kitsap County will trigger a need for increased capacity on either the Edmonds/Kingston passenger-vehicle route or a direct Kingston/Seattle passenger route around 2015 or 2016.

Based on current models and forecasts, peak time vehicle traffic leaving Colman Dock is projected to increase from the 2003 daily average of approximately 1,600 vehicles during the four-hour westbound PM commute to a projected 3,700 vehicles during the same four-hour period in 2030. The number of walk-on passengers is projected to increase from the 2003 daily average of about 4,800 to over 17,000 during the same four-hour period in 2030. To accommodate this projected growth, the vehicle holding capacity of the existing terminal will need to be increased.

Even today, the Seattle Ferry Terminal does not have enough area to hold vehicles waiting to use the ferry on peak travel days, particularly Fridays and during the summer. Currently, the total number of vehicles waiting for the ferry both on and off the dock during the PM peak ranges from 500 to 750, depending on the day of the year. Approximately 600 vehicles can be stored on the current dock and approximately 125 vehicles can be stored on Alaskan Way north of Royal Brougham Way. As a result of the limited storage capacity on the dock, vehicles back up on Alaskan Way, even beyond Royal Brougham Way, for several days each year. These waiting vehicles disrupt and conflict with through traffic on Alaskan Way and in roadway intersections.

As noted above, the number of vehicles waiting to board the ferries at Colman Dock will more than double by 2030. Without additional vehicle holding capacity at the terminal, it is estimated that the vehicle queue on city streets will exceed the capacity of the street on an average travel day in 2030. The result would be level of service (LOS) F conditions at intersections south and east of Colman Dock.

- Connections for passengers to and from multi-modal transportation services are inadequate to meet current or future demand

As foot passengers disembark from ferries, the Marion Street pedestrian bridge experiences a surge of eastbound pedestrian traffic. During the morning rush, over 600 foot passengers cross the bridge during a 5-minute period as they rush toward the city. This level of eastbound usage makes it difficult for westbound travelers to walk against the heavy flow. Many westbound travelers choose surface routes as the path of least resistance. However, surface routes have inadequate lighting, irregular curb heights, and poor pavement conditions, resulting in unsafe conditions. The Marion Street pedestrian bridge is also an impediment to wheelchair users and people with limited mobility. The bridge has several inclines that do not meet ADA requirements. In addition, the ramps from Alaskan Way leading up to the terminal do not meet ADA requirements.

Bus access to the terminal is limited and infrequent. Only two bus routes and the waterfront trolley have stops at Colman Dock. Transit connections are not clearly signed. Long wait times for transit service along Alaskan Way is a significant deterrent to transit use. To get to the bus tunnel and other downtown stops with more frequent service, transit users must walk up the steep hill for 2 to 6 blocks depending on their walking route. Frequent east-west transit services end several blocks east of Colman Dock and therefore do not offer convenient connections.

Without continuing police enforcement, taxis can overwhelm the curbside dropoff/pick-up area in front of Colman Dock (as they have in the past) and thus limit space for passengers who need to use this area.

- Security enhancements are needed to comply with Homeland Security

The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, enforced by the US Coast Guard as part of its Homeland Security mandate, requires a number of physical improvements be made at Colman Dock, including enhanced monitoring of the public access area between Alaskan Way and the ferry vessels, access control, and areas for passenger and vehicle screening.

### **Other WSF Objectives**

- Control Fares through Non Fare-Box Revenues

With the passage of Initiative 695 in 1999, a major source of WSF's revenue was lost. As a result, WSF was directed to increase fare-box recovery rates up to 80 percent, in excess of the standard recovery rates for transit agencies. Currently, WSF is approaching a system-wide fare-box recovery rate of over 70 percent as a result of increasing fares repeatedly since spring 2001. Over the past five years, car and driver fares have increased almost 40 percent.

To provide an additional source of operating revenue, and thus to keep fares within the reach of its customers, WSF needs to generate more revenue from non fare-box sources. Redevelopment of Colman Dock, including the creation of opportunities for joint development, is a means of bringing additional revenue into the system without increasing the burden on passengers.